Psych Boulevard

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INTRODUCTION

Psych Boulevard is a journey I did not set out to write, but one I found myself living through and later gathering into words. These pages hold fragments of moments when my mind felt both familiar and distant, when I moved through experiences I could not fully grasp in real time but came to understand in reflection.

I write from a place of having been undone and, in time, slowly reassembled. There were periods when I lost hold of my own thoughts, when what I heard and felt no longer aligned with what was real. There were also moments of stillness, of return, of being held by care I did not know I would need. This work carries those shifts quietly, without insisting on explanation.

In shaping this collection, I allowed myself to follow the movement of my mind as it was, not as it should have been. I have come to recognize how delicate it is, how easily stretched, and how deeply it requires rest, patience, and attention. Writing became a way to sit with that truth.

Psych Boulevard is personal, but it is also open. It does not attempt to resolve what cannot be neatly resolved. Instead, it stands as a record of passage, of endurance, and of a gradual return to self.

prescription of a milligram of risperidone
ever since this mind developed a mind of its own
like a rudder left alone to self-propel into a crash
like a city reduced to sulfur and ash
I assemble the ashes on this psych boulevard
and continue the journey scarred
but grateful, above all for soundness of mind
and for people that surround who are kind

(Im)penetrable

grand illusions becloud
from colossal height
overworking body and mind without rest
sacrificing mental health on an altar of more

keeping up with the rat race without fail
tendering to the dreams that keep awake at night
assuaging voices demanding greatness and nothing less
caving into pressure

bring it on
and some more
rest is for the weak
increased work hours with little slumber

lacking nap time and siesta
an overworked muse rebels in protest
refusing to carry on
with apparent abuse

the breakdown happened
like a lightning bolt from the distant heavens
metal-mental clash in loud tempo
nocturnal voices unleashed from cocoon

conversations with self in public space
unseen persons
seven in number with distinct names and voices
unwelcome visitors need no invitation

pervious to the rhythms of stress
barefoot native dance
unveiling cause and effect
in dramatic fashion and style

I have learned hard lessons
that nature will always have her way
lessons on thin borderlines
rest is not for the weak

Hallucinations

auditory hallucinations revealing pseudo deep secret things
the voices have come from higher realms in torrent
devoid of order, of reason
like a cacophony

sunken into the abyss of self
pupils dilating in torment of mind invasion
delusions of grandeur
and utterance of gross meaninglessness

with an appetite to go unclad
in episodes of crisis
on an inane sloppy cliff
voices increasing in number and momentum

in this place, everything speaks urgently
earth has a voice that speaks
trees whisper in tongues and greet in canopy
birds and fishes have a language

earth in fury
threatens to swallow
the moon bites and stings
with arrows shot yonder

all of creation bearing both name and voice
with bound hands and feet
as a prisoner in detention
so is the mind in an episode of crisis

control is lost
on directionless compass
as paranoia overtakes with reckless speed
on the mind's freeway

fatally crashing into a rock
casualties surpass survivors
in episodes and leaps
eroding presence of mind

Six minutes

It happened the day before yesterday
eerie and incoherent whispers
whispering into the formless void
a cry for help

screaming voices in plethoric unison
this mind was no longer mine
invaded by visitors from the empyreal realm
mumbling incessant incoherencies

refusing to be silent
refusing to be comforted
visions of seven heavens and a new earth
with religious mimicry

nefarious beings surround
ready to perform their enterprise
as predators hound their prey
stalking each varied step

engulfed in an ocean of helplessness
with a mind on tour the earthly corners
helping hands surround
as angels on duty

visions of fictional characters
my visitors came calling from the abyss
arrant chaotic misbehavior
saliva splatter and disjointed speech

heightened tensions of beclouded reasoning
illucid interpretations of sensory information
it happened the day before yesterday
core mystical nocturnal episodes in six minutes

help found me semi-sinking, nearly raped
leading back home
into the puzzled embraces
it happened the day before yesterday

Voices

in an episode of senile psychosis
nocturnal solo long walk barefoot
voices of persons
conversing in loud tempo

persistent, urging to strip-self-naked
unable to keep still
with a mouth running like a broken faucet
uttering perpetual incoherence

voices
like privy information
promoting violent outbursts
replete with biting and screaming at innocent bystanders

voices
overwhelmingly eroding consciousness
slipping into void
and cannot be found

voices
like a drumroll
in mind, in head, loud but clear
a forceful invasion of self

thought like voices
controlling, commanding
like an order on a parade ground
voices in head, there is chaos there

Crisis

chatterbox lips self-speaking ceaselessly
episodes of crisis
of delusions and hallucinations
alive in nighttime

easeful dialogues
pinned
to the ground
chained hands and feet

words dancing before my eyes
like salsa
an arsenal of armor
with a mind on overdrive

food is far from here
three days have passed since last supper
water - craving for more
as fuel to a raging fire

mental crisis, a state of being -
present in the body
absent in the mind
desperate for an intervention

bewildering volatility of emotion
hot-cold synthesis
with screams incessant
and fits

the juggle of memory
bits and pieces remembered
of familiar words and phrases
unable to discern fact from fiction

attracting an audience
mingled with opportunists, the mockers, the curious and the genuine alike
attempting an escape
from hands owned by familiar faces

Asylum

committed to an asylum
tethered like a wild animal in captivity
syringe and tablets follow like the ruptured voices in my head
strapped as a patient in a psych ward

danger to self and others
self-consciousness is eroded from the flood of psychosis
presence of mind is yet to return
drifting further into the abyss

family surrounds as ants to sugar
praying
I am not alone in this
visitation in rounds by morning by night

shelter from the stormy days and nights
come in doses
as a fusillade of ferocious voices
come cascading without mercy

shelter eludes me
for my mind is no longer mine
sanity is as distant
as the east is from the west

no retreat no surrender
doses of medication penetrate blood stream
day in day out
without fail

strapped to bed post
a patient in an asylum
forced unconsciousness
by injections and medication

wanting for strength
fewer words are uttered
sleep prevails over psychosis
calm restored.

Restoration

drunk on antipsychotics
pumped in via tubes and tablets
engulfed in treatment
by night, by day

three days have passed since
my mind left on a voyage of its own
like a dissatisfied lover in search of more
provoked by unrequited love

the voices reduced in pitch and intensity
before a final goodbye
released, like one from prison walls of own design
restored, no more no less

after three days in the abyss
now lingering, this familiar taste of freedom
very real and very there
sanity is restored

may this mind of mine never again wander
like a soul long lost
refreshing, is this newfound liberation
like a cold bath on a hot afternoon

the voices in my head have ceased
I can no longer hear them
own thoughts reign
tears of joy run down my eyes

this heart beats with gratitude
beats with soundness
for I possess a mind
newly born
a miracle akin to resurrection hour
as family sigh a sigh of relief
I call each by name

Discharge

never the same thereafter –
psychosis changes you
weak and afraid
released into the open hands of family

mother – wrinkled with worry –
and a sigh of relief at swift recovery
others were there
enveloped in unusual silence

home seemed like a distant place
as far as east from west
the atmosphere
was quiet and pensive

radiant clouds assembled
after noon as the sun shone in resplendent glory
seeming like the others that had gone before it
but I was not the same

episodes in bits and pieces
come to remembrance
but gratitude fills this heart anew
for sanity is an underrated gift

the days passed slowly
disbelief heaving in each passing second
the events of the days gone before
seemed like a dream

like a callous nightmare
shame crawling
knowing from one day to the next sanity can dissipate
as vapour in the wind

eeriness filling marrow
prayers finding these lips worthy
admixture of gratitude and fear
psychosis changes people

The road to recovery

The road to recovery
is a path laden with meds
minimal stressors,
abundant rest

The road to recovery
is a path laden with mines
with a mind ready to implode
upon provocation

a lifetime required
for recovery
his words pierced my heart to pieces
perennial?

Medication –
take it day by day
without fail by night
when voices hover and hound for prey

sentenced
filled with regret – had I known
I would have slowed down
I would have rested more, stressed less

had I known mental health was so fragile
I would have handled with care
I would have paid attention to the signs
I would have rid myself of toxic habits

guilt overwhelms on some days
how does one bring illness upon self
I should have treated myself more kindly
I should have known, applied less pressure

The road to recovery is an arduous path,
the unending lane
of learning to cope with self,
one day at a time

Outpatient

Overcrowded rooms and corridors
out-patients rumble in turns
it appears one is never alone
there are many that battle

cases varying in seriousness
assemble in rank and file –
those responding well to treatment
and those who are not

healthcare is affordable
as are meds
the long queues are
of least concern

Mother is by my side
each step of the way
I am grateful for her support,
for her presence

timed romance with both
psychiatrist and psychologist
newfound lovers
on the path that leads to recovery

poking and probing
in different rooms
on progress report
and side effects

visitation after visitation like an insatiable lover
until the end draws nigh
medication on medication
to never miss a day

cross on shoulders
scarred for life
I wear a badge on my chest which reads,
Survivor.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yewande Adenike Adebowale holds three law degrees. She is a Poet and Author of three collections of poetry, titled, "The rise and fall of rhymes and rhythms" (2025) “A tale of being, of green and of ing" (2019) and Voices: A collection of poems that tell stories (2016).

Her poems have appeared in Clay Literary, Trampset, Galleyway, Afritondo, Shuf Poetry, The Open Culture Collective, Lumiere Review, Dipity Magazine, The Unconventional Courier, The Agam Agenda, The Creative Zine, Konya Shamsrumi, Sevhage, Moremi Review, Tampered Press, Nightingale and Sparrow, Versopolis, Auvert Magazine, Panocha Zine, Visual Verse, Pride Magazine, The Dirigible Balloon, The BeZine, Outside the box Poetry, Spirits Magazine, Unheard Stories Magazine, Genre: Urban Arts Magazine, Unclear Magazine, Broots Magazine , Beyond the Quill, Wayf Journal, Ave Astra, Cicada Creative Magazine, Poetry as Commemoration, Afro Unidad, Poetry Moves Us Magazine, Castle of our skins, Spoken Black Girl Magazine, Floodlight Poetry and elsewhere.

She is the winner of the World Bank YouthActonEDU Poetry Prize, the Project Knucklehead prize for creative rebellion, The Guardian Newspaper Poetry prize and the Fidelity Bank prize for creative writing.